

NEWS FROM:

International Terrorism and Nonproliferation Subcommittee



U.S. Rep. Ed Royce, Chairman

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Royce Statement on Nonproliferation and the G-8

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation (ITNP) held a hearing on the nonproliferation issues that will be addressed at the upcoming G-8 Summit. ITNP Chairman U.S. Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA-40) issued the following opening statement:

"Next week the G-8 heads of state will meet in Gleneagles, Scotland. This annual Summit's focus will be Africa and climate change. Having chaired the Africa Subcommittee, I particularly welcome this attention to the continent. Another important issue to be addressed, one that has received less press attention, is the G-8's three-year-old Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

"Meeting in Kananaskis, Canada in 2002, soon after 9/11, the world's leading industrial countries rightly decided to act to see that WMD material does not fall into terrorist hands. The G-8 countries pledged to spend \$20 billion collectively over ten years in Russia and the former Soviet states on 'Nunn-Lugar'-type programs, called cooperative threat reduction programs that the U.S. pioneered in the early 1990s. These programs have managed to better secure hundreds of tons of nuclear material, deactivate or eliminate thousands of nuclear weapons and deter scientists and technicians from peddling their WMD expertise to rogue states and terrorists. The U.S. pledge was \$10 billion (\$1 billion a year) which is roughly the amount we spend on these efforts. Other G-8 countries have been less supportive. To date, while some \$17 billion has been pledged, far less actually has been spent on programs. As one witness will testify, outputs have not matched inputs.

"Some cooperative threat reduction programs have run into bureaucratic, legal and political roadblocks. The Russian government has been uncooperative in some cases, calling into question its commitment to the Partnership, of which it is part. The U.S. and other countries, though, have not always been attuned to Russian concerns. To my thinking, even with the problems, these programs are a demonstration of how international cooperation can improve international security. Given Cold War-era animosities and the suspicions that naturally surround these sensitive weapons and facilities, we could have seen far less progress since the Soviet Union's collapse.

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"More needs to be done though, with a sense of urgency. We can be all but sure that terrorists are seeking WMD capabilities. We know that WMD materials are proliferating. These programs are only one part of our efforts against proliferation, but they are an important part. Arguments that they should be conditioned on Russian cooperation in other areas have a high hurdle to jump - these efforts are critically important.

"The Partnership has internationalized cooperative threat reduction, which used to be a game for only the U.S. and Russia. This is a good thing, if the Partnership reaches its potential of bettering coordination, streamlining, dividing responsibilities, forging common views, and prodding countries to contribute to this critical effort. The Partnership should be doing much better.

"It is unclear how much attention the Partnership will receive next week, or more importantly, what concrete actions will come out of the Summit. The core theme of this Partnership meeting will be 'Pledges Into Progress,' ironing out obstacles to progress so that more programs can begin. Solving the liability issue that has frustrated plutonium disposition efforts would be a big breakthrough. As with past G-8 Summits, a final statement on nonproliferation will be issued, though the host British government reportedly resisted a statement initially, wanting to keep the Summit focused on Africa and climate change. Some now wonder if the Global Partnership is losing steam?

"Last week, while discussing the Africa agenda for the G-8, Bono mentioned that the European countries put great stock in G-8 Summits. He called these annual meetings the 'Super Bowl.' I don't know about that comparison, but it is important that we do all we can to use this opportunity to build momentum for the Partnership, which was established through U.S. leadership, and which is addressing issues critical to our national security."

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